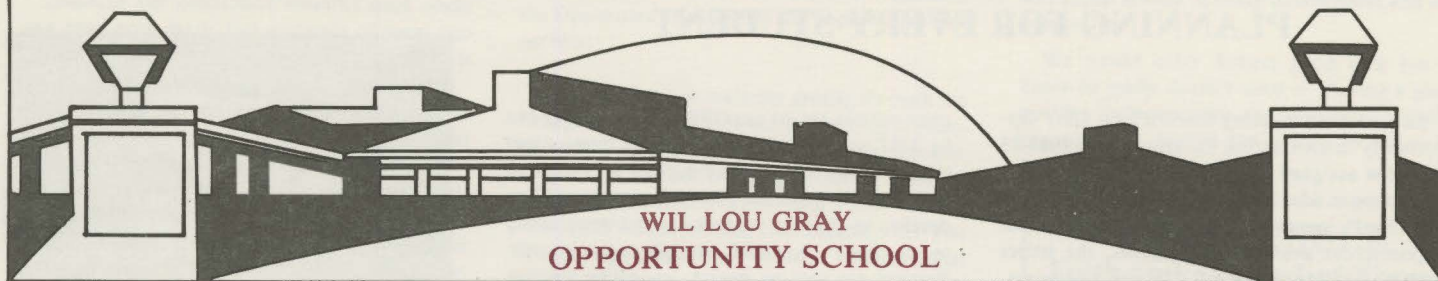


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OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS



VOLUME 1

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Hannah Meadors Elected New Chairperson of WLGOB Board of Trustees

JUN 1 1 1985

STATE DOCUMENTS



"Mrs. Meadors believes we should honor the past, live in the present and plan for the future."

Recently, during its October meeting, the Board of Trustees of Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School held elections of Officers and Mrs. Hannah Meadors was selected to be the new Chairperson. Mrs. Meadors succeeds Dr. Marvin Efron, who served as chairman for the past four years.

Mrs. Meadors was born in Florence, South Carolina, grew up and was graduated from high school there.

She then came to Columbia and attended Columbia College but received her undergraduate degree from Coker College where she was a Music-Education major.

Later, she was awarded a Master of Education degree in the field of Guidance from Clemson.

Mrs. Meadors has been employed for the last three years by the Education Division of the Office of the Governor. The emphasis of her work occurs in the area of Early Childhood Education.

Mrs. Meadors resides in Columbia with her husband, the Reverend Doctor Marshall L. (Jack) Meadors, who serves as District Superintendent of the United Methodist Churches within the Columbia area.

They are the proud parents of one daughter and three sons who are: Jane M. Cromley who is married and who has two children, Hannah and Mary; Marshall Meadors who is a third year medical student at MUSC; James Meadors who

owns his own construction company in Charleston and John who is a first year Law student at the University of South Carolina.

Mrs. Meadors loves to reminisce about her early life spent in Florence. She remembers her public schooling as being a "very positive experience" and one of her most vivid and cherished memories is that of families being school, community, family, church oriented.

She believes that we, as caring and concerned, mature human beings, should make it our practice to "honor the past, live in the present and plan for the future".

One of her most indelible recollections occurred when she was a student at Columbia College.

Miss Wil Lou Gray was an alumna of this institution of higher learning. From time to time, Miss Gray would come to the campus to give talks to the student body.

Mrs. Meadors considers herself extremely privileged to have had the opportunity to speak with Miss Gray on a personal, one-to-one basis. It would not be unfair to say that one conversation colored many of her future attitudes and convictions about education and life in general.

Even now, after more than 30 years, she remembers very profoundly how Miss Gray cared about people of every race and strata of society. She makes the statement, with deep conviction, that Miss Wil Lou "seized every oppor-

tunity to serve people".

It was this initial contact with her that inculcated within Mrs. Meadors a great and abiding interest in the affairs and welfare of the Opportunity School.

Mrs. Meadors observes that our society is very mobile and points to her own family as a prime example. Her husband's occupation necessitated their moving a great deal throughout the state of South Carolina. However, instead of viewing this as an occupational burden, she sees it as being beneficial, because it has given her a better idea of the wide scope of people's needs and basic requirements.

Mrs. Meadors says that in view of the way society has changed, the greatest gift one can receive or possess is that of a second chance.

Mrs. Meadors maintains we are in an unprecedented "high tech" society and that what is needed is "high touch" to promote this much needed humanizing influence within our society. She sees such a school as Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School stepping into the void and providing this sorely needed service.

Mrs. Meadors is of the opinion that the faculty, staff and Board of Trustees of a school or institution of learning should be bound together in a timely, human and warm relationship. If such a general attitude predominates, they cannot help but be of one mind and present a strong, honest, united front.

These views of Mrs. Meadors are warmly received and we count ourselves very fortunate to have her as the newly elected Chairperson on our Board of Trustees.

FACULTY NOTES

We are all happy to have Mrs. Dorothy Turner (Teacher of Office Occupations) back with us. Mrs. Turner injured her shoulder in a fall at the school several months ago. Although not fully recovered, Mrs. Turner has returned to her students and is doing well.

We are equally happy to have Mrs. Linda Owen back with us. Mrs. Owen has been recuperating from surgery for the past several weeks. WELCOME BACK, MRS. OWEN!

OPP TEAMS PROVIDE INDIVIDUAL PLANNING FOR EVERY STUDENT

Each student entering the Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School during the school year 1984-85 has been assigned to an OPP Team. Although the acronym adapts nicely to "Opportunity" in the school's name and the program **does** enhance opportunities available to students, the letters "OPP" stand for Outline for Personal Progress. The plan is a case management approach to meeting the needs of students. The ultimate goal of the OPP Team is to assist in preparing the individual student to live independently in society and to make whatever contributions his abilities will allow.

The program developed as a result of a study, completed in the spring of 1984, which indicated that there was a genuine need for a means of providing an individual monitored plan for each student. It was determined that the plan needed to cover goals and objectives for development in the areas of the academic/vocational, psychological/social, health/medical, and recreation/dorm and campus life.

To make such a plan effective, it was decided that a team, made up of the home room teacher, dormitory counselor, and any other appropriate personnel would work with the student, continually, from his/her first week in school. This was implemented and, on occasion, outside consultants or parents have also been invited to participate in OPP Team meetings.

The first goal established usually deals with the student's academic/vocational development, based upon test scores, past academic achievement and interests. As the student becomes better acquainted with the school and the OPP Team, new goals are established to meet needs identified through the counseling which occurs. Staff responsible for carrying out treatment or methods necessary for achievement of established goals are identified, informed, and assess-

ment criteria are set up. OPP Team meetings can be held as often as needed, since home room teachers and/or dorm counselors see students each day. As goals are achieved, new ones often develop so that the student has the opportunity to continue to build on his achievements. Reports are sent to parents/guardians/counselors at the end of each 9 week period. Included are academic Report Cards, Behavioral Evaluations and Job Evaluations. On other occasions, when it is deemed appropriate, parents/guardians/counselors may be called on to provide assistance and give or be given information.

It has been rewarding to see that most students respond well to the individual attention they receive from their OPP Teams. Although far more time and energy have been required of faculty and staff in order to carry out the responsibilities of OPP Teams, most have expressed satisfaction in knowing they are doing a better job of serving students.

Reporting to parents/guardians/counselors can now be accomplished on the full scope of a student's activities, not just his/her academic scores. It is also expected that the collected information regarding students can readily supply statistical data important to future development of the school.

The greatest contribution that OPP Teams make would certainly be their attempt to provide a program designed to meet each student's own needs, a program that has the concern and attention of those best able to provide for those needs. That's what Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School has always tried to achieve and what it continues to strive toward.

Dr. Johnnie Spaulding
Dir. Ed. Support Services

New Officers of the Board Elected

The Board of Trustees held elections of officers at its October meeting at the S.C. School Board's Conference in Myrtle Beach. The newly elected officers are: Mrs. Hannah Meadors, Chairperson; Mr. Devon Belcher, Vice Chairperson; Ms. Linda Spivey, Secretary; Ms. Patricia Watts, Treasurer. Mrs. Meadors has been employed for the last three years in the Governor's Office, Education Division. Her primary work there deals with Early Childhood Education. Mrs. Meadors resides in Columbia with her husband, the Reverend Doctor Marshall L. (Jack) Meadors, who serves as District Superintendent of the United Methodist Churches within the Columbia area. They have four children.

Mr. Belcher is a 1968 graduate of the Opportunity School. He attended and was graduated

from Clemson University with a B.S. degree in Textile Sciences in 1972. In 1977 he earned an M.S. degree in Mechanical Engineering, also from Clemson. He presently is employed by Reliance Electronics where he is a Manufacturing Service Manager. Mr. Belcher is married and has two daughters. Mr. Belcher also serves on the WLGO Alumni Board as its Treasurer.

Ms. Linda Spivey is a 1978 graduate of the Opportunity School. She was employed by South Carolina National Bank in Columbia for four years and presently works for Southern Bank.

Ms. Patricia Watts is a 1972 graduate of WLGO. She attended and was graduated from the University of South Carolina where she was an Education Major. She has taught in the Lexington District Two Adult Education Program and presently teaches at Lexington High School.

Gibson Joins WLGO Staff



Recently, Mr. Hugh Gibson, Jr. joined the WLGO staff as a Public Information Specialist II.

Mr. Gibson is a native Virginian having been born in Richmond, Virginia.

His academic background is diversified having attended Virginia Military Institute, the University of South Carolina and Palmer Business College. He possesses degrees from both USC and Palmer.

He is a veteran of the Naval Reserve and participated in combat operations off the Vietnamese coast on a Charleston based destroyer, the USS Manley.

Mr. Gibson has worked at several State agencies before coming to the Opportunity School.

He is married and he and his wife reside in the St. Andrews area.

His wife, Mary, is a teacher of the Visually Handicapped in Richland School District 1.

He enjoys working at WLGO and looks forward, with great anticipation, to presenting our school and its many worthwhile activities and programs before the South Carolina public via the twin media of words and pictures.

OPPORTUNITY SCHOOL STUDENTS HELP RESTORE ST. JOHN'S CHURCH

On Saturday, February 23, 1985, ten students and three staff members from the Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School reflected great credit upon themselves and their school. They helped other volunteers, who had also given of their time and energy, to clean up St. John's AME Church on the Congaree River.

In recent weeks, the old church had fallen prey to vandalism of just about every type and description.

The Lexington County Law Enforcement Association contributed \$1,000.00 towards the Church restoration project.

Other groups and/or individuals who gave of themselves included county inmates and local, county and state elected officials.

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SPOTLIGHT ON STUDENTS AND STAFF

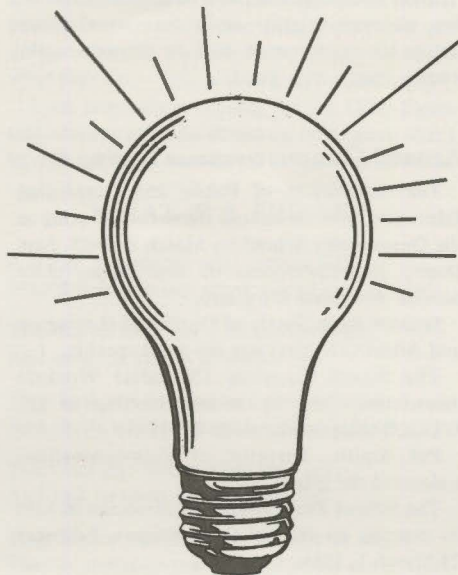


Robert Long

Robert Long is in his third year at the Opportunity School. He is a handsome, intelligent, articulate young man. He is maintaining good grades, participates in sports and witnesses about his Christian faith quite readily. He is also red headed.

All of this, in a very real sense, makes him a unique member of our student body. But there is another label, we can apply, which makes him a most unique person on the Opportunity School campus. Because Robert always strives for excellence and others recognize this character trait in him, he was elected President of the 1984-85 Student Council.

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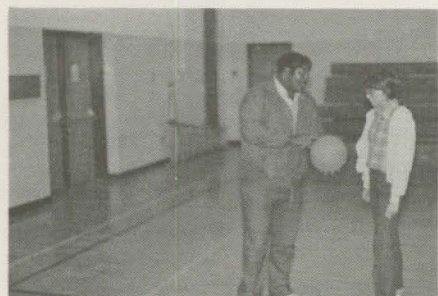
Coach Bobby Asmond

Coach Bobby Asmond is very well known and well liked on the WLGS campus. He has almost become a fixture in that he has been with the school since 1971.

He is a very tall and large framed man - no one would probably ever guess that he had played professional football for three years. However, he has done this and much more besides.

The coach is a native Columbian. He was graduated from C.A. Johnson High School in 1962 and was the recipient of 18 college scholarships upon his graduation. He lettered in football, basketball and track.

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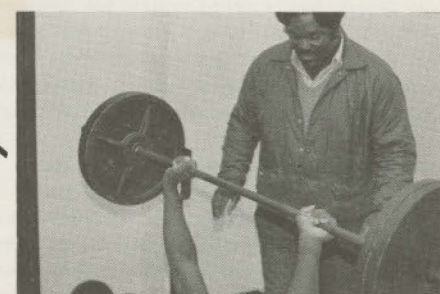
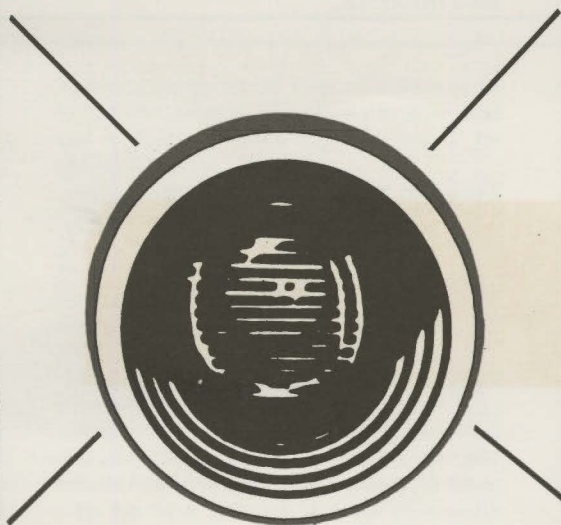
Coach Asmond seems to be telling Nancy Gandy, "behold, this round object you see before you is called a basketball." Coach is well versed and participates in all sports.



Coach Asmond instructs Mike Hallex and Robert Long on the proper methods of centering and receiving the football.



Many opposition players found these young, WLGS men to be formidable opponents during last years football season.



Coach demands a great deal from himself and others.

ENHANCING WIL LOU GRAY STUDENTS' EMPLOYABILITY

During the past eight months, the Educational Support Services staff at the Opportunity School has been working to design programs that will assist students in successfully making the transition from a residential school environment to independent status in the community as working adults. Current research indicates that 1) positive work experience, 2) training in employability skills (how to present yourself and your skills through job applications, interviews, and resumes, how to conduct a job search, etc.), and 3) support services during the transitional period are crucial to young people's success in finding and holding onto jobs. Three new programs have been implemented during the 1984-1985 school year to meet these special needs.

First, an on-campus work detail program gives each student a chance to earn a positive work evaluation from a campus work "supervisor". Students perform a variety of functions: assisting in the cafeteria, in the school library, in classroom and dormitory maintenance, and in administrative office duties. Their campus supervisors evaluate their job performance quarterly and the written evaluations are included in the students' job reference files. A favorable evaluation for on-campus work responsibilities is a prerequisite for staff assistance in finding off-campus employment. The work detail program

at the School gives the student a chance to discover what an employer will expect in terms of attendance, dependability, initiative, and other important worker characteristics.

While approximately half of the students currently enrolled at Wil Lou Gray are enrolled in a vocational skills program (Auto Mechanics, Building Construction, Food Service, Distributive Education, Office Occupations, and Nursing Technician programs are offered), staff members have concluded that all of our students need employability training. Toward that end, we are implementing the "Career Passport" program which helps students prepare themselves for job hunting, filling out applications, portraying their prior work experiences and relevant skills in a positive light to prospective employers, and establishing and moving toward long-term employment goals. As a part of the Career Passport program, we will have community volunteers with business experience, including members of the area Golden Kiwanis Club, assist students in practicing their job interview skills.

Finally, we are experimenting with a special program for students who have achieved their academic or vocational education goals on campus and now need the School's support services in order to successfully make their "transition" into the community. Several of these students

have secured part-time or full-time employment in the Columbia area and need our residential and counseling services for a short time while they save money for a rent deposit and find a place to live. Others are applying for admission to Midlands Technical College and need our help in processing admissions and financial aid applications while they look for part-time employment to cover some of their initial college expenses. Each of these "Transition Program" students has a contract with the School which outlines their daily schedule and responsibilities, and the contract can be terminated if the Educational Support Services staff and the student's OPP Team determine that the student has failed to comply with its terms. We are excited about the Transition Program and feel it is an important opportunity for mature students to "get their feet wet" in the community while receiving important support services from the School.

In coming months, we will continue to explore ways to assist our students in developing the skills and insights they need in order to make a smooth transition to life as independent adults.

Kate Swanson
Vocational Development
Specialist

AROUND CAMPUS

- The first school blood drive of 1985 was held on January 28th in the gymnasium on the WLGO campus. The project was sponsored by the Explorers, Post 591 and was declared a success. Although many students and staff were suffering from the flu, the student body managed to donate 35 pints of blood. The coordinators for the American Red Cross were grateful for the assistance of the Explorers as each displayed enthusiasm and desire to meet their goal.

Those persons giving "the gift of life" were: Steven Yens, Jerry Parcher, Fred Fibbs, Tavo Drayton, William Sumter, Tim Weatherly, Mike Hallex, Willie Young, Betty Williams, Dana Janness, Donnie Brooks, Jackie Boyd, and Paula Carter.

Also, Trina Allen, Richie King, Hugh Simmons, Cedric Simmons, Bernard Jareen, Clarence Adams, Tyrone Goode, Todd Jackson, Nathaniel Brown, Robert Lyles, David Baker, Tim Fernell and Troy Quarles.

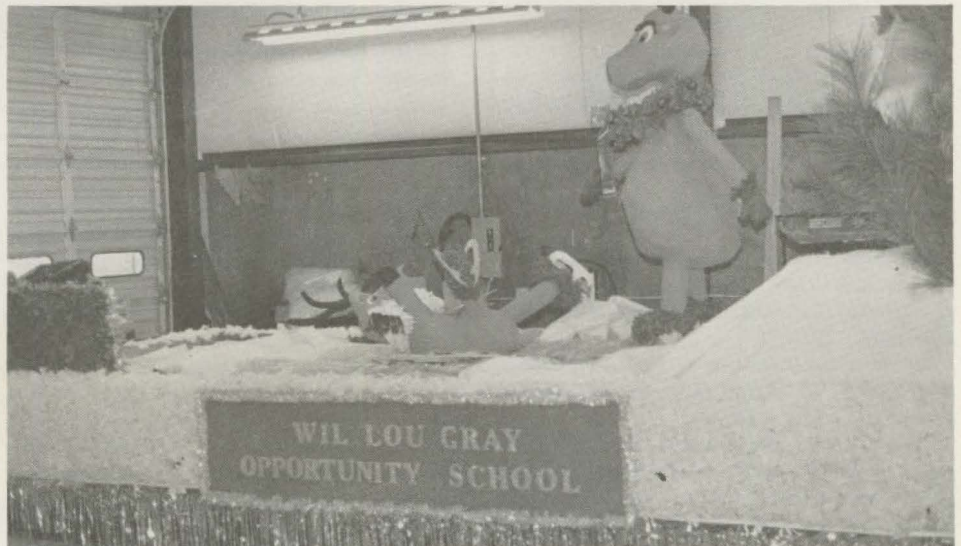
- A Valentine's dance was held on February 14th with Donnie Brooks furnishing music. Our Food Service class furnished the food with Home Economics students serving. Student Council and team leaders sponsored the dance.

- Aerobic dance exercise is being held every Monday, Wednesday and Friday in the Nursing Technician's Classroom #127.

The classes are being held jointly by two members of our faculty - Mrs. Lida Moore and Mrs. Bonnie Foster.

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SUCCESS COMES IN LARGE PACKAGES



The float was very beautiful and ingenious. Much credit was heaped upon the school and on the heads of those who created and helped to create this wonderful attraction.

The saying has been going around for many years that lightning doesn't strike in the same place twice.

The floats we have entered in the Carolina Carillon Competition for the past two years have won high honors.

The year before last we won first prize for the

most original float and this past year we even outdid our own previous performance and received the competition's highest award, the Grand Marshals' prize.

Much of the credit for this accomplishment goes to our art teacher, Mr. Scott Carruth.

Continued on pg. 6

Long (continued from pg. 3)

Some of the descriptive remarks used could not have been made just a couple of years ago and Robert is the first to admit this statement is true.

He will tell anyone, who cares to listen, what attending Wil Lou Gray has meant to him without embarrassment or hesitation.

We at WLGS feel we know where Robert is going, so let's see where he has come from.

Robert is from Johnston, S.C. which places him within the boundaries of Edgefield County.

He attended Johnston Primary School for four years, Johnston Elementary for grades 5-8 and Strom Thurmond High School during his first two years in high school.

He dropped out and joined the S.C. National Guard. Subsequently, he went to Ft. Leonard Wood in Missouri for Recruit Training.

As it was, Robert did not complete Basic Training and it was not for physical reasons or because he didn't have the spunk. Robert admits the fault lay in his lack of formal education. He was Honorably Discharged from the Army.

His parents, Mr. & Mrs. Garfield Bowick, realized their son needed a foundation on which to build his life. By this time, Robert was cognizant of this fact, also.

Thus it was that he became a student at the Opportunity School.

He is a member of the Explorers. At the Opportunity School, Robert has become a model student. He participates in football under the tutelage of Coach Asmond. He has earned the right to reside in an Honor Dormitory (privilege given only to those who maintain a good scholastic record). This past summer, Robert took part in a Job Partnership Training Act program at the WLGS campus.

On September 7, he was nominated to the Student Council, gave his campaign speech on September 17th and was elected to the Student Council Presidency on September 18th.

Here are a number of remarks Robert would like to direct to our readers' attention regarding the Opportunity School and the impact it has had on him:

"I have grown in maturity greatly through the help given to me by both the day and night counseling staff at WLGS. Every student here is able to work at his/her own pace. The pressure of educational deadlines is relieved.

It really makes you feel comfortable when you are being taught by patient, professional educators who really care about what they are doing to benefit their students. They care about what they do — educationally and personally.

I am presently preparing for the GED Exam and concentrating on obtaining other goals that I have established for my future life as soon as

WHAT IS A FRIEND?

A friend is someone who cares a lot;
Who'll help you out when you're on the spot.

They try to help you with life everyday;
And care for you in a special way.

They look out for you in a time of need;
And that's when they are a friend indeed!

You trust and honor what they say;
And talk to them in a special way.

They'll love you like your brother or sis;
They're someone you thought you'd never miss.

Friends come and Friends go;
And in your life their love will show.

And when something happens to
this one in your life;
It makes you mad and full of strife.

And in your life there'll be some cheer;
But never one who'll be so dear.

By: Robert Long

possible. Once I secure these personal goals, I will adjust myself to being independent and self-supportive."

We would offer Robert good luck but we know he really doesn't need it. **Having a good, positive outlook on life and being a hard worker are what are needed for success in life — not luck.**

TIME CAPSULE

Faith and a Barrel of Flour

Miss Gray opened the first Opportunity School with much faith and the help of individuals and groups concerned about people. Her brother, A.D. Gray, donated a barrel of flour. Volunteers donated their time. Others chipped in with a bit of cash for a total of \$40.00. The State Department of Education's illiteracy commission paid the salary of a teacher and the daughters of the American Revolution donated the use of their school building.

St. John's Church (continued from pg. 2)

A Cayce town official took special notice of the work that was accomplished and has asked the Opportunity School students to volunteer, yet again, to help clean and clear a park on the Congaree within the corporate limits of Cayce.

The Church congregation furnished lunch and everyone had a good time.

The WIS and WLTX television personnel assigned to cover the project gave excellent coverage and great credit to the students and staff for the work they accomplished.

Those students participating were Robert Lyles, Rhonda Pinckney, Tyrone Goode, Willie Young, Clyde Goings, Rodney Satterfield, Beaver Jett, Robert Long, Tavio Drayton and Pam Ellis. The staff members involved were Dale Bosworth, Scott Carruth and George Smith.

Asmond (continued from pg. 3)

He chose to attend North Carolina Central College in Durham, North Carolina and was graduated in 1966 with a B.S. degree in Physical Education.

It was at this point that he took a very long step indeed. He signed with the San Diego Chargers as a free agent.

Coach says it really took some getting used to when he had to condition himself to playing before huge crowds. But it was not just the crowds that had him intimidated at first. The lights, he says, were unbelievably bright, the stakes they were playing for were very high and he was having to go up against such men as Roosevelt Grier, who had been one of his biggest heroes when he was a boy coming of age in Columbia in the late 50's.

The coach pursued this fast life for three years. He was injured, but not seriously as were some of his teammates who took injections so they wouldn't feel the pain and then were badly hurt because they could feel nothing.

Commenting about those three years, Coach

Asmond says he regrets none of it because he was, at last, given an opportunity to do a great deal of traveling which had been one of his lifelong ambitions.

During this time, he was selected for the All Conference - Little All American award.

The Coach then went to Midlands Tech where he had the title Recruiter in Charge of Athletics. He was there for two years during which time he established programs in golf, basketball and flag football. Before Coach arrived on the scene, they had had no organized physical fitness programs whatsoever.

Also, within this time frame, he was the Offensive and Defensive Line Coach of the now defunct Semi-Pro team, the Columbia All Stars.

He has been affiliated with the Community Action Agency where he was the Director of Community Development and was in charge of the activities taking place in a four county area. This organization is, likewise, no longer in existence.

Coach Asmond says he is constantly receiving offers from other schools and institutions to coach and head up their athletic programs but he

has always rejected these offers.

He pointed out that within the past months, 15 of the students he works with at the Opportunity School have started attending church. When he was telling this, he was very animated and happy. If you hadn't known, you might have thought this was the face, manner and expression of a man telling how he had made a million dollars.

Coach does not make a million dollars at the Opportunity School but he has been worth a million to the children he has helped, taught, and befriended over the years. They can't give him monetary rewards either. What they do give, is their honest love and affection for this giant of a man and, from all appearances, he is thriving on it.

Coach wouldn't trade places with anyone. He is happy and contented to be who he is, doing what he is doing, i.e. helping young people find a better, more fulfilling, productive life, where he wants to do it. After all, why should such a man trade?

Success (continued from pg. 4)

He is a very modest person and reminds us approximately 50 students and four teachers mounted a concerted effort to make the float the success that it was.

The float featured three papier-mache reindeer in an outdoor sports scene. The two largest deer (they were eight-feet in height) were portrayed skiing and ice skating, while a smaller deer, powered by a motor, was shown breakdancing.

Eight students in elf costumes were seated on bleachers on top of the float and four other students walked beside the float in the parade.

From the projects very inception, Scott Carruth indicated it was to be a much more ambitious project that what had been attempted and accomplished the year before.

The reindeer, made of wood and chicken wire, were wrapped with two layers of papier-mache dipped in glue and water, and covered with two coats of latex house paint.

The reindeer's skis were fashioned from cardboard and the ice skates from poms (squares of tissue paper). The hats and scarfs worn by the deer were also made from poms.

The 1 1/2 hour parade began about 9:30 a.m. on Saturday, December 8, 1984, at the corner of Main and Richland Streets.

The students involved in the Opportunity School float included Richie King, Darren Benenhaley, Mike Chavis, Jackie Foard, Trey Missroon, Allen Rouse, Glen Motter, Willie Young, Timmy Fennell, Bobby Pound, Raymond Sumter and Steven Tennant.

Also, George Robertson, James Smiley, William Sumter, Paula Carter, Joe Caywood, Robert Leslie, Wayne Richburg, Jody Calhoun, Calvin Smith, Karen Johnson and Alvia Lee.

Also, Cedric Simpson, Thomas Turner, Michael Lott, Tammy Meseroll, Scott Barrineau, Danny Kelly, Craig Tyler, Sonja Banks, John

Pinckney, Philip Gossett and Jerry Mixon.

Also, John Billups, Ken Sanders, Lesha Bundrick, Steven Yens, Mike Hallex, Mike Faulling, Robert Lyles and Leon Broomfield

Mr. Carruth says he owes a special debt of gratitude to the following staff members and faculty: Ms. Bonnie Foster, Ms. Lida Moore, Mrs. Denise Hoce, Ms. Mary Janicki, Ms. Margie Sanders, Mrs. Jackie White, Ms. Deborah Haney and Mr. Fred Flagg.

Asked to comment on how he feels about all of this, an even brighter smile than usual plays across his countenance and he answers quite readily: "very, very good".

Around Campus (continued from pg. 4)

The Association of Public and Continuing Education held its annual Breakfast Meeting at the Opportunity School on March 8, 1985. Sam Drew, Superintendent of the Opportunity School, welcomed the group.

Senator Ryan Shealy of District 24 (Lexington and Aiken Counties) was the guest speaker.

The South Carolina Custodial Workers Association held its annual meeting at the WLGO campus March 20-21, 1985.

Pat Smith, Director of Administration, welcomed the group.

The School Plant Managers Association held its meeting on the WLGO campus, February 28-March 1, 1985.

Opportunity Knocks is a quarterly publication of the WLGO.

Sam F. Drew, Jr. Superintendent
Hugh E. Gibson, Jr. Editor

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